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THE MUSE IN MOTLEY

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The Muse in Motley
by Hartley Carrick

"Majores majora sonent."

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22/6/09

CAMBRIDGE
BOWES AND BOWES
MCMVII

For permission to re-publish these verses I have to thank the Proprietors of *Punch*, the Editors of *The World*, *The Westminster Gazette*, and the late Editor of *Vanity Fair*.

H. C.

FOREWORD

"TALKING about poets," says Saint-Beuve, "is a ticklish business, and the more so if in your day you have done a little poetising yourself." But the inditing of light verse is a malady so incident to youth —is so general, so harmless as a rule, so soon over— that a few words may be allowed to one who (alas!) has almost outgrown the practice.

It is a pleasant practice while it lasts; and, to be sure, as some men (like Falstaff) are born to be boys perennially, so some (like Béranger) are born to write in this form all their lives, and to grow perfect in it. But among Britons this is rare. Praed, Calverley, J. K. Stephen, all died young; while Prior and Gay, though classics, earn their tribute of criticism to-day along with a shade of contemptuous pity, and the robuster author of Hudibras lived long enough to starve. In this country a talent for light verse will be wise to get its trouble over early.

Most of us, in fact, write it as an unconscious preparation for writing something else; start with it naturally, as, had we been born under Queen Elizabeth, we should have started with sonnets, in the

manner of Petrarch—"the sort of thing Petrarch would have written if Petrarch had been born a fool" perhaps—or with fables imitated from Ovid. Beyond a doubt, it must have been pleasant to live in times when two-thirds at least of the technique of English writing, verse and prose, awaited discovery, and twice or thrice a week one young man could astonish another with some new invention, trick of phrase, turn of metre, trap to catch this or that grace of Italy or of the Pleiad, and transfer it into English. I never repeat to myself Wyat's *Nay, Nay, mistress!* for instance, or Surrey's *Soote Season*, or the forgotten Master What's-his-name's *Adieu love, untrue love!* without envying the poet the half-hour—it must have been delightful—when he sat repeating the stanzas, surprised at himself and at the wonderful new thing he had made. Nor can I care a snap of the fingers about the morality and a dozen other what-nots in *Venus and Adonis* when, as I read, every stanza shews me young Shakespeare enjoying himself at the top of his bent, playing with new sounds, figures, phrases, wanton as a colt in a fresh pasture.

But young men in these later times have to choose another way of breaking their teeth upon literature, and not simply because they are lesser men. The

phrases, the literary forms, have been discovered: some hundreds of men have written good English in some hundreds of different styles. The boy of literary talent now starts with the discovery that someone —Keats or Tennyson, De Quincey or Carlyle—is a marvellous writer, "If only I could do things like these!" he says to himself with an 'awed surmise' after reading (say) De Quincey's *Suspiria* or Tennyson's *Lotus Eaters*. He notes the styles of these men, and by-and-by, as he grows familiar with them and with others, he plays at experimenting. Then he finds that, although he cannot reproduce their serious beauties, he can catch their mannerisms: and on these mannerisms, translated into parody, he works off his high spirits. Also he plays with ingenious and far-fetched rhymes. It is all practice; play upon the instrument which, when he has mastered it, he will turn to his own, usually soberer, uses.

So I dare say that the sprightly verses in this little volume mark but a stage in Mr. Carrick's development. But I dare say, too, that he will remember them with pleasure, as they must be read with goodwill (and perhaps some wistfulness) by all of us who have 'passed this way' in their time. *Et ego in Arcadia*—and turning these pages, I am free of it all

again—the punt under the bough, the seat in the college garden, voices in the quad. They were distracting enough, these last, in moments of strenuous composition; but if we could hear them now, Good Heavens, how eagerly we should drop our pens!

A. T. QUILLER-COUCH.

November, 1907.

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The Muse in Motley

TO

ROWLAND HARRIES

AND

NORMAN STICKLAND

O Tempora!

(*After* J. K. S.)

Will there never come a season
  Free from incoherent rot,
Free from rhymes that know no reason
  And a play that has no plot;
When the frocks, and frills, and fichus,
  Even Guardsmen fail to please,
And the "Madcaps" and the "Michus"
  Lose (at last) their devotees:

When no more shall "genial George's"
  Giddy chorus charm the stalls,
Nor Terpsichorean orgies
  Ape the lower music-halls;
When a girl in man's apparel
  Shall not make the pittite roar;
When the Ivans cease to Caryll
  And the Rubens Paul no more.

The Song of Six Suburbs

(After Mr. Rudyard Kipling.)

Brixton

Though far outside the radius you roam,
Where shall a fairer prospect meet the eyes?
Brand-new, like Aphrodite from the foam,
The homes of Brixton Rise.

Tooting

Supreme am I, Suburbia's guiding star,
And when I speak let lesser tongues be dumb;
The prefix "Upper" shews the class we are;
Where Tooting Beckons, Come!

Hampstead

Upon your North-West Passage scale my heights,
And mark the joyous crowds that sport beneath;
Men call me "Happy": O the strange delights—
The dalliance on my Heath!

Peckham

A peaceful calm envelops every street,
And like an old-world idyl life drifts by;
Where else such courtly couples shall you meet
A-comin' thro' the Rye?

Clapham

Unto my yoke my stalwarts meekly bend:
Daily, between the hours of 8 and 9,
To dare worse horrors than the Pit I send
Sons of the Chatham line!

Ealing

"Last, loveliest, exquisite," I give to those
Civilian warriors from India rest;
What suburb boasts the dignified repose
That clings to Ealing, W.?

A Martyr to Gout

Once with a constitution scorning
The signs that lead direct to gout,
I laughed to hear the solemn warning—
Be sure your bins will find you out!
But now I know those "beaded bubbles"
Were "winking" with their other eye,
And all too late perceive the troubles
Bred in the Beaune I loved to buy.

Get hence, old Port, so rich and fruity!
Thou bringest naught but grief and pain;
And thou, my Sherry—*et tu Brute*—
Must never kiss my lips again;
O false Champagnes, could only ye know
The actual ills that haunt me now,
You'd surely mourn with Maraschino
This purple flush upon my brow.

The glories of the kitchen dwindle,
Nor yield the joys that once I felt;
My saddened eyes forget to kindle
When sirloins make their presence smelt;

Time was when it was wondrous pleasant
To taste the birds and drain the cup,
Now, long before I see the pheasant,
I realise the game is up!

Cut off from my superb Madeira
My spirits, once so ardent, quail
Before the prospect of an era
Of Lemon-squash and Ginger-ale;
Pinched are my cheeks once round and ruddy,
And *this* is now my chiefest care—
To scan my knuckle-bones and study
The sermons in the chalk-stones there!

Man Proposes

When I was keeping terms in Oxford town,
Acquiring, at a price, the tone that adds
Distinction to the man in cap and gown,
Denied (we think) to Cambridge undergrads,
Acquaintances I numbered without end,
But cherished only one familiar friend.

As boon companions in our "Fresher" days,
We used to scale o'nights the Warden's walls,
Then, later, entered on the stage-struck phase,
And spent one whole vacation in the stalls;
At Tree's productions nearly grew hysteric,
And caught the fever known as Ellenteric.

Together both would skim along the track,
Or share the pains that only rowing gives;
Together 'sugar' in the seething pack,
And earn our captain's lurid adjectives;
Or in the Parks contrive to swell the roar
That hails each effort that produces four.

Together we disseminated Art,
And wore the ribbon of a cultured set;
Together (if we got a decent start),
Contributed a passable duet;
At "smokers" or at other festive crises,
Like vocal pirates, we disturbed the high C's.

We differed in the choice of a career,
Although our aims were similarly great;
He, I remember, was a Volunteer,
And full of schemes to put the army straight;
While I, who had no taste for warlike quarrels,
Coveted Mr. Austin's wreath of laurels.

Alas! we parted, and to-day I learn
My chum threw up his mission, to reveal
To workmen in a bicycling concern
New points in that old doctrine of free-wheel;
While I, no more a literary loafer,
Am advertising for a berth as chauffeur.

Look on this Picture

O English Girl, divine, demure
(As Mr. Dobson somewhere calls you),
For whose sweet smiles and glances pure
The amorous youths, beneath your thrall, sue,
You say that Chivalry is dead,
And that you loathe our ways of wooing,
And fondly ask what cause has led
To our deplorable undoing.

I answer: In the good old days
Our brave gallants would thrum upon a
Guitar, and sing their ladies' praise,
Just as a Spaniard lauds his Donna;
In ringing tones those courtly men
Would plead the old ecstatic passion,
But oh, we lost our manners when
The serenade went out of fashion.

How sweet it must have been when she
You madly loved unbarred the shutter,
And, startled by your upper G,
Looked out and let her 'kerchief flutter

Conceive the scene: the window-sill;
A delicately-rounded elbow;
The dainty face; the eyes that thrill;
Below her, an immensely swell beau.

And then, beneath the evening star,
To praise her lips, her eyes, her bright hair,
And gladly suffer the catarrh
Brought on by singing in the night air!
But Phyllis, nowadays I fear,
That were there but the mildest May dew,
You'd find no modern cavalier
Would risk a chill to serenade you.

Perchance once more the Golden Age
May come, and that on which my heart's set,
Will be the fashionable rage
With those who constitute the Smart Set.
Till then the old Gregorian chant
Will still sum up our foppish danglers,
(I'll give its modern variant),
Alas! not Angels these, but Anglers!

Stands England where She Did?

They ask us loudly why we are downhearted,
What secret sorrow lines each careworn brow—
I answer, "Sirs, our glory has departed;
We have no catchword now."

Once, in the days that knew not "Mrs. Kelly,"
'Twas sweet to ask one's unsuspecting Pa,
The while our sides shook like a calves'-foot jelly,
If he had seen the Shah.

Scarce was that query stifled when another
Filled every honest boy with lively doubt,
As strangers stopped to ask him if his mother
Knew that her son was out.

I have known solemn merchants in the City
Betrayed to anger by some cheeky brat
Rudely enquiring, in a famous ditty,
Where they procured that hat.

Coming to later times, when Mr. Bailey
Evinced his quaint propensity to roam,
Our prayers were uttered for sweet William, daily;
"Won't you," we cried, "come home?"

But now no more our walks abroad are greeted
With some deliciously familiar strain;
No whistled melodies (*ad lib.* repeated)
Refresh the weary brain.

Awake, some lyric bard, and break the silence!
"Milton, thou should'st be living at this hour!"
The street-boy's cry, that once was heard a mile hence,
Hath not its ancient power.

And though, perchance, someone somewhere is hatching
A phrase to sweep the pantomimic boards,
Just now no epidemic that is catching
Tickles our vocal chords.

The Herald

Unwelcome dish! my palpitating heart
  Thrills at the sight of thy strange, mottled hue,
  Now villainously pink, now almost blue,—
Hall-mark infallible of rhubarb-tart.
Alas! no tricks of culinary art
  Can render thee agreeable; when new
  Thou 'rt far too sour; when old and bitter, who
Would pass his plate and risk the stringy part?
Yet, though I shudder when I see thee by,
  There flashes suddenly across my mind
    The thought that thou, base subject of my rhymes,
    Art the sweet harbinger of warmer times;
And thereupon I gulp thee down and cry,
  "When Rhubarb comes, can Spring be far behind?"

The Plaint of a Playgoer

I do not sing of music-halls
That draw admirers of the high-kick,
Nor rhapsodise within the stalls
Of theatres that boom the psychic;
Of course, tastes differ, but although
De gustibus non disputandum
I think the ballet far too slow,
And, as for problem plays, can't stand 'em.

Give me the good old-fashioned kind
Of drama of the "heavy" order:
Dorothy, pale, demure, refined,
And cousin Harold who adored her;
The rival with the golden hair,
Who swears he shall not wed Another;
Mamma who finds the millionaire
Is after all her long-lost brother.

I loved to watch the villain's rage,
As with a gait that proved him knock-knee'd,
He ramped and ranted round the stage,
And swore in accents plainly Cockneyed;

Beneath his spell the stalls grew numb,
And matrons in the pit would tremble
When he declared a time would come,
Or warned his partner to dissemble.

And then the tension of that scene
When, heedless of our boos and hisses,
Sir Rupert meets the heroine,
And then and there demands her kisses!
One moment more decides her fate;
We hear her voice for help appealing;
When lo, the hero vaults a gate,
And sends his adversary reeling!

And oh, the final, crowning phase—
When Rupert fires that double-barrelled
Revolver at the wings, and slays
The village lunatic (not Harold);
'Tis here we get an extra thrill,
For, ere the idiot goes aloft, he
Owns he purloined the missing will,
And begs them to forgive "poor Softy."

This is the rich, full-blooded rough,
Ripe, mellow drama that is *real*,
And though some think it mawkish stuff,
It represents my fond ideal;

And ere you scorn my taste for love
  Triumphant, every ill surmounting,
Remember, as I said above,
  For certain tastes there's no accounting.

A Rhyme to Robert

Whether we see you with uplifted hand
Obtrude your form upon the public view,
Ably "conducting the orchestral Strand,"
Yourself a noble symphony in blue,
Or watch you trap that scorching motor crew
Who fail to spy you lurking in the shade,
We fondly ask what man can vie with you—
At whose approach the bookie flies afraid,
And vocal beggars cease to ply their roaring trade.

When some low reveller begins to pitch
Backwards and forwards, till his feet that roll
Resemble circumstances over which,
Unfortunately, he has no control—
'Tis you who place on that convivial soul
Your helping hand, despite the angry frown
Of those supporters of the flowing bowl
Who throng the shady purlieus of the town,
Where etiquette forbids all kicking *till* you're down!

But oh, beneath that grim, unyielding belt
There beats a heart that's amorous and gay.
Oft in a silence that is almost felt
Those rubber soles go down the area way,
Where there awaits you, scandal-mongers say,
A chaste salute and something good to eat
To brace you up 'gainst some nocturnal fray.
I ween no racing man e'er felt so sweet
A thrill as Mary Jane who knows the fav'rite's beat!

So, Robert, here's my hand. I know 'tis said
By certain kinds of peevish-minded folk
That it is not your gallant heart but head
That is composed of honest British oak;
But those are vulgar persons who would poke
Fun at all objects, howsoe'er sublime;
E'en I have heard coarse urchins for a joke,
(And at a distance) bawl an ancient rhyme
That bids them fly to you if they would know the time.

THE "NUCIFORM SAC"

(*The source of all our bodily ailments is said to be the "nuciform sac."*)

THOUGH our ancestors studied the problem of pain,
And the "why" and the "wherefore" of ills,
It was always beyond their poor skill to explain
How it is we get fevers and chills.
And at last it transpires that our ignorant sires
Must have wandered afar from the track,
For according to Shaw's latest effort, the cause
May be found in the "nuciform sac."

When you suffer from spasms that harass the chest,
And your side is one horrible ache,
When you're tortured by nightmares disturbing your rest,
And you shiver and freeze when you wake;
Then, although you're inclined in your liver to find
An excuse for the pains in your back,
What alone ought to claim the legitimate blame
Is your peccable "nuciform sac."

When you find, as you walk, you grow giddy and faint,
And your head throbs away like a gong,
Do not think when you ponder upon your complaint
It is just your digestion gone wrong;
For there isn't a doubt that the murder is out,
And that ev'ry dyspeptic attack
Is the simple effect that results from neglect
Of a pain in the "nuciform sac!"

More Whitewash

(The character of Judge Jeffreys has recently been defended with great vigour by Professor Churton Collins.)

And so we learn that history has treated him disgracefully;
Judge Jeffreys, after all, was not a mass of inhumanity.
With feelings of relief we watch Professor Collins trace fully
His brjght career, and write him down a model of urbanity.

By neatly balanced argument he shews us how unfair it is
To think this worthy man was one who lived for blood and massacre;
His tender heart was never prone to countenance barbarities,
And executions sickened him whene'er they did, alas! occur.

His treatment of a witness was exceedingly magnanimous,
He seldom raised his voice or fist when rising to examine him;
In short, he never shewed the slightest trace of any animus,
Though down upon the perjurer, and swift to spot the sham in him.

And, though accustomed to regard him as a second Pilate, all
Must now admit he treated Sidney with delightful courtesy,
Nor was the punishment reserved for Lady Alice Lisle at all
Excessive, and at hanging her no person was so hurt as he.

Then, after this discovery, if ever there should be or is
A person who believes the tales about his partiality,
A single glance at this Professor's scintillating theories
Will prove that we must take him as a type of true morality.

Ode on a Bathing-Machine

(With apologies to the shade of John Keats.)

Thou still unrivalled pride of ugliness,
Thou, whom the steady progress of old Time
Cannot affect, whose age no man can guess,
Whose very presence constitutes a crime!
Who are these men who cling around thy shape?
What mellow "d"s are heard, what sultry oath
Slips from each rival for thy favours! He
Clings to thy saffron sides, while he, though loth
To cease the mad pursuit, would fain escape.
What cries! What yearnings to annex the sea!

Who are these coming up to sacrifice
Their morning leisure? Let the harnessed beast
Lead on those maidens glowing as the skies,
In spite of winds that bluster from the East.
Lo! from the boarding-houses on the shore,
From the Marine end and the Grand Hotel,
The folk come flocking up this joyous morn,
And thou, serene, with two or three (or four),
Wilt rattle to the sea, nor heed the yell
Of would-be bathers left behind forlorn.

Erratic shape! Sans latitude! What breed
Of mediæval craftsmen hewed and wrought
This ark-like structure clogged with weft and weed?
Thy hideous form leads backwards to the thought
Of days far distant, old and past recall.
Yet when old age our feeble frames shall waste
Thou shalt remain, and to our children shew
Thine ancient aspect as thou quaintly sayest:
"The truth is, beauty isn't nearly all
Ye need on earth, nor all ye need to know."

Counter Attractions

If it should fall to my distinguished lot
To play the umpire in a beauty match,
And I were told (as Paris was) to spot
The girl who seemed to be the fairest catch,
I scarce could wait till Gertie chose to trip in,
Ere I awarded her the winning pippin.

I do not heed the sneer of Brown, who hints
Her lower row of pearls unclasps at will,
Nor Smith, who coarsely states her rosy tints
Can owe to Nature practically *nil;*
To me her curls are of the finest gold,
Though Jones has warranted they're only *rolled.*

I like to stand and watch the supple wrist
That hews my mid-day snack of ham or beef;
I much admire the finely-sculptured fist,
Raised on the marble slab in *Bass-relief;*
But, oh! 'tis Heav'n to touch the lily hand which,
Lovingly, mustards my anæmic sandwich.

She is a maiden of capricious moods:
I catch, at times, a withering retort,
Or else, in more convivial interludes,
Hear her demurely whisper "Mine's a port."
At that soft phrase the gilded bar grows brighter,
And heart (and head) perceptibly the lighter.

The lucky man who proudly takes her out
May reckon on an intellectual treat,
For over oysters and some double stout
Her anecdotes are often very neat;
She'll give a hungry "traveller" a few points
In her appreciation of the Blue-points!

I know that there are some who rashly state
That he who cottons to her ample skirts
Becomes in time a tipsy reprobate,
Who "follows form" and dreams of backing *certs*.
They wrong the girl, for I have often stood
And heard her valedictory "Be good."

And so it is my wish, ere all too soon
The vulgar potman's "Time" disturbs the air,
To toast this siren of my pet saloon,
The marker's hope, the waiter's fond despair.
Ho! Vintner to the cellar,—and procure
A wine as bright as she (and as mature!)

"ALL, ALL ARE GONE, THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES."

THERE was a time when we were wont to sit
With pipe in mouth and paper in our hands,
And roar as coloured minstrels flashed their wit
Across the yellow sands.

What did we care if ancient jests they told—
What cared we though we chanced to recognise
Among the tinkly banjo's notes the old
Three-chord trick in disguise?

We shared our praise 'tween one whose welcome tones
Completely drowned the corner-man's guitar,
And one who tapped the would-be funny "Bones"
That never seemed to jar.

Then—swift transition from the *humerus*—
What "loud collisions of applauding gloves"
Welcomed dear, sentimental Uncle Gus
Who sang his Dinah's loves.

Now all is changed. Harmoniums profane
The "pitch" once sacred to the tambourine;
Pierrots usurp their dusky brothers' reign,
And desecrate the scene.

No longer does the natty seaside lass
Lend to that troupe her sympathetic ear,
While Algernon, her love (like Lycidas),
Forgets to leave his pier.

Where have they gone, this clan whose loss we mourn?
Do they, far off, make alien bosoms glow?
Or have they passed to that appointed bourne
Where all good niggers go?

"And O! the Difference to Me"

(*After Wordsworth.*)

She dealt, and seemed in worldly ways
A guileless little dove,
And made me loth her trumps to "raise,"
And score a lot to love.

But ah, my feelings none can know
When Lucy said that she
Would pay one-half her debt, and owe
The difference to me!

THE EXPLANATION

FERDINAND. Here 's my hand.
MIRANDA. And mine, with my heart in 't.
—*The Tempest*, Act III. Sc. 1.

YOU called, and I did not reply
To your polite command;
Whereat you heaved a tiny sigh
And trifled with your hand.

Did I play false with you? Ah, no!
It was not that at all;
I did not hold a trump, and so
I could not heed your call!

A Sherry Whine

Must we, indeed, believe the gloomy tale
Of sunny Andalusia's decline,
And learn that there is hardly any sale
For this incomparable golden wine?
If there is truth in what the vintners state
(And here, perhaps, it's prudent to be wary),
This peerless drink has met the self-same fate
That ruined Sack and ostracised Canary.

Once, sequent on the vanishing tureen,
We welcomed, plainly served, the sole or cod,
Then this brave wine monopolised the scene,
Now—write upon the menus "Ichabod":
The wretched cook sends up a messy dish,
Labelled some unintelligible *à la*,
And the decanter that attends the fish
Holds cheap Sauterne or second-rate Marsala.

Time was, and not so very long ago,
When guests observed the once age-honoured use
That bade them in an after-dinner glow
Pass and repass "the old familiar juice";

So, too, if cake and sherry were not set
Before the mourners at a smart interment,
The grievous breach of funeral etiquette
Put the assembly in a dreadful ferment.

How through the epicure's distracted mind
Must dart the simply agonising ache—
To call for sherry and alas! to find
'Tis only used to flavour tipsy-cake!
Soon, like the sceptics who have oft denied
There ever breathed a Helen or a Paris,
A rising generation will decide
This nectar is a liquid 'Mrs. Harris.'

I cannot tell the cause of this eclipse
Of fruity Manzanilla's bright career,
Nor why men miss their matutinal nips,
And turn, instead, to stout or bitter beer:
I only know that I am most unwell,
My head is heavy and my temper so-so,
The doctor thinks it means a gouty spell,
And puts it down to "pale old Oloroso."

So, though 'tis truly very sad to think
The taste for sherry is upon the wane,
And though I hold that as a nutty drink
We nevermore shall see its like again,

Perhaps the fact that we are drinking less
From those bodegas by the Guadalquivir
May mean that I shall lose the biliousness
Afflicting my notorious evil liver!

Another Whine

It is the fashion nowadays
For us to think our sires degraded,
To shudder at their vicious traits,
And blush to quote the things that they did;
Their craze for gambling, need I state,
Offends our moral way of thinking,
But most of all we deprecate
Their undiluted love of drinking.

And yet, although I note with pain
The lengths to which those festive orgies
Were carried in the genial reign
Of England's first and second Georges,
I somehow feel I love the beaux
Who flourished in the Roaring Forties,
And could, myself, have joined with those
Who knew what good old fruity port is.

For though it was their lot to be
Before the Chamberlainite era,
They learnt to drink Imperially
In pints of choicest old Madeira;

And if at times their politics
Made them assume the pose of squabblers,
They did not wave coercive sticks,
But patched things up with sherry-cobblers.

Nor have I ever heard that these
Old bucks, who paid such court to Bacchus,
Were easy subjects for disease,
Or caught the ills that now attack us:
Appendicitis and the 'flu,'
That haunt our homes without restriction,
Were quite unknown to them who knew
The gout was quite enough affliction.

Those were the days when round the fire
Wit circulated with the liquor;
And 'rafters echoed' as the squire
Split sides and sodas with the vicar;
It makes one sad when one compares
Our modern style of conversation,
When talk consists of 'shop' and shares,
Or at the best a 'stock' quotation.

Doubtless our ancestors, who spent
The golden moments seeking pleasure,
Could not compete with us, whose bent
Lies in amassing untold treasure;

But in a drinking-bout, my son,
With any modern, boastful ranter,
Your great-grandfather would have won
In the proverbial decanter!

"The Old Order Changeth"

Where Londoners go most astray
Is in the dress that they display;
  Throughout the summer they endure
  The costume that is *de rigueur*,
Until they nearly melt away.

Though scorched by every burning ray,
Still fashion's dictates they obey,
  And here it is, I've long been sure,
    Where London errs.

But now I hear the papers say
Frock-coats and gloves have had their day;
  The flannel collar's tempting lure
  For chafing necks provides a cure,
And e'en Parisians wish that they
    Were Londoners.

A Vexing Question

"He left the name at which the world grew pale."
—Samuel Johnson

"Punch, or The London——"? that 's a question,
Sir,
Concerning which my mind is doubtful; dare I
Confess my inclination to prefer
Plain Chărĭvārī?

When there are some who, gifted with an 'ear,'
Thrill with dismay and turn quite sick and shivery,
Should it, perchance, be their sad lot to hear
Aught but Chărĭvărĭ!

Again some Constant Readers (so I've heard)
Insist upon the sound that rhymes with Harry,
And, therefore, would pronounce this awkward word
As Chărĭvarry.

And one, I knew, who lingered on the "i";
Alas! that scholar is not now alive, or he
Assuredly would say, if pressed, "Well, my
Tip is Chărĭvărĭ."

Then, since our notions are so hazy, who
Can guess the answer to this crucial question?
Come, *Mr. Punch*, I beg to trouble you
For *your* suggestion

"Age Cannot Wither Her"

Demurely full of girlish tricks,
And dimpled with a pouting smile,
The modern crone of sixty-six
Must now be reckoned juvenile;
Her pearly teeth and satin cheek
Are made to match her youthful brow;
'Tis even thought ill-bred to speak
About the Middle Ages now.

Oh! Mrs. A., and Madame X.,
Who boom the Blond Street beauty cult,
To think that for such trifling cheques
You guarantee this brave result!
How do those operating hands
Restore "lost tone" to wrinkled dames,
And fit the fashion that demands
Old pictures in enamelled frames?

Should any lady think her hair
Suggests too much the Autumn tints,
She does not in the least despair,
But follows your attractive hints:

By apt adulteration's aid,
Some artful spirit brings again
The latest fashionable shade—
A rare oasis in the plain.

Those subtle touches never fail
To smooth away the marriage-lines;
The sallow cheek so sere and pale,
A guinea rouge incarnadines;
And oh! how sweet must be the thrill
That penetrates a grateful soul,
When the divine electric drill
Eradicates some horrid mole!

To what a pitch of high content
That matron's ardent spirits rose,
When the "Proboscis" instrument
Equipped her with a Grecian nose!
And how some hearts have yearned to buy
Those patent "straps" for flabby skins,
That not uncharitably try
To hide a multitude of chins!

Nor does the mode in which your days
Are spent, dear ladies, cause offence:
To thoughtful minds your latest phase
Reveals the hand of Providence;

For though this beauty-culture fad
Has gone, perhaps, a bit too far,
'Twould make the brightest of us sad
To see you as you really are!

Oxford Revisited

I WANDERED down "The Broad" and up "The
High,"
As I was wont, in far-off days, to do—
When lo, debouching from "The Grid," came
two
Resplendent youths who, sauntering idly by,
Cast on my form a supercilious eye,
Whose glance said very plainly, "Who are you
That dare obtrude yourself upon our view?
This place is ours, for we have bought it. Fly!"
I realised that I was on the shelf
In that brief moment; saddened and forlorn,
I paused irresolute upon my way;
Then, thinking that a dog soon has his day,
Strode on, till suddenly I found myself
Standing (like Ruth) "amid the alien 'Corn.'"

De Mortuis——?

I NOTICE that when critics write
Approvingly of lighter lays,
They always quote with much delight
Their one pet formula of praise—
"This work recalls the cleverness
Of C.S.C. and J.K.S."

Whate'er our little bards indite;
However plainly each displays
The heavy touch which dulls the bright
Edge of his wit, I find the phrase—
"These sparkling stanzas effervesce,
Like C.S.C. and J.K.S."

Humour, perhaps, may not be quite
The strongest of our author's traits;
His mode of treating themes be trite;
Yet once again the critic brays—
"Such rhymes remind us, we confess,
Of C.S.C. and J.K.S."

These lines were not conceived in spite—
Offspring of sere and yellow days;
I hope that I am too polite
To rob a poet of his bays:
But why disparage in the Press
Poor C.S.C. and J.K.S.?

The Call of the Blood

My duty calls me and I must obey;
Of miserable men unhappiest,
I wander forth upon my weary way,
And, like the sun, slope slowly to the West.

I am a man who loves to laugh and jest,
But oh, just now I'm anything but gay,
For I am put to the supremest test,—
My duty calls me, and I must obey.

What is the reason, I can hear you say,
Of this strange palpitation of my breast?
Have worldly losses made me seem to-day
Of miserable men unhappiest?

Ah no, I must admit that I am blest
With wealth enough to keep the wolf at bay,
And 'tis upon no loanly sort of quest
I wander forth upon my weary way.

It is the thought of handing round a tray
At six "At Homes" that gives my mind no rest,
For 'tis to these regretfully I stray,
And, like the sun, slope slowly to the West.

And that is why, y-clad in fancy vest,
I creep along, fulfilled with sore dismay,
And vote Dame Etiquette a "perfect pest,"
Because she thus insists that I must pay
My *duty* calls!

The Lay of a Liberal

When I read about the crimes that *The Standard* or *The Times*
Are so cruel as to say that we commit,
And am told that all the fads of the Labourites and Rads
Plainly prove that they are mentally unfit—
Then a feeling of unrest permeates my anxious breast,
And my confidence in Winston is upset,
And I tremble at the knees till my mind is put at ease
By the pages of *The Westminster Gazette.*

When *The Telegraph* dilates on the Navy Estimates,
And laments our lack of patriotic fears,
And *The Mail* and *Globe* unite in denouncing with delight
Any scheme for the extinction of the peers;
When they urge the obvious fact that M'Kenna's want of tact
Would disgrace a caterwauling Suffragette,
Then I get a pain inside till I see their views defied
In the columns of *The Westminster Gazette.*

When I see a hostile Press in a passion effervesce
O'er our manners in a House of Commons scene,
And declare without a doubt it was solely brought about
By Sir Henry, who could not restrain his spleen—
'Tis refreshing to be told, in a type that's large and bold,
It was Arthur who was fuming in a pet,
And my joyous spirit laughs at the caustic paragraphs
Which reprove him in *The Westminster Gazette.*

"Jolly Boating Weather"

Take me away from the city
  Sweltering here in the heat;
You on the river, pray, pity
  Those who are scorched in the street.

Sweltering here in the heat,
  Sick of the rush and the riot,
Those who are scorched in the street
  Long for the stream and the quiet.

Sick of the rush and the riot,
  Ah! how the toilers to-day
Long for the stream and the quiet,
  Pine to be off and away!

Ah! how the toilers to-day,
  Weary of crowds and of crushes,
Pine to be off and away,
  Down 'mid the reeds and the rushes.

Weary of crowds and of crushes,
  Oh, it were Heaven to glide
Down 'mid the reeds and the rushes,
  Phyllis, alone, by my side.

Oh, it were Heaven to glide
  Into the stillness and splendour,
Phyllis, alone, by my side,
  Dainty, and restful, and tender.

Into the stillness and splendour,
  When we had skirted the weir,
Dainty, and restful, and tender,
  Phyllis should learn how to steer.

When we had skirted the weir,
  Hid in a shady backwater,
Phyllis should learn how to steer,
  Should I be safe if I taught her?

Hid in a shady backwater,
  Specially made for two,
Should I be safe if I taught her?
  (Phyllis has eyes of blue.)

Specially made for two!
  Think of it, *pater*, and pity
Me in your office, and, *do*
  Take me away from the city!

SPRING

Now blackbirds' carols, clear and sweet,
  Evoke from adolescent lambs
A pleasantly responsive bleat
  That earns faint praises from their dams:
Now is the time when "rippling rills"
  To amorous youths sound most beguiling,
And when courageous daffodils
  Traditionally come up "smiling."

And though an unemotional man
  Who thinks it little short of crime
To copy that erotic clan
  Who babble of their loves in rhyme,
I find the first flush of the Spring
  Affects my own prosaic fancy,
And positively makes me sing
  About my earliest sweetheart—Nancy.

I met her years ago; 'twas due
  To chance alone that made me hint
That in my pocket there were two
  Assorted kinds of peppermint;

But 'twas enough; we both agreed,
In hurried intervals of suction,
That there was after all no need
For any formal introduction.

Next afternoon we kept our tryst,
And looked and felt extremely wise;
From her—angelic egoist—
I learnt the art of making eyes!
And oh, my rapture at the end,
When tersely (*à la* Alfred Jingle)
She told me she did not intend
For ever to continue single!

She is Another's now I know;
But at this season of the year
I feel the old, ecstatic glow,
And drop the sentimental tear;
I 'm sure I've never been the same
Since that coarse brewer stole her from me;
She calls him Jack—but once the name
That thrilled her fickle heart was Tommy.

I do not blame you, Nancy; nay,
You must not think I 'm still your thrall;
In fact, except from March till May
You are not in my thoughts at all;

And even then I cannot think
  Why there should be this bond between us,
Unless some telepathic link
  Perchance exists 'twixt Ver and Venus!

The Puff Oblique

"*Interdumque atram prorumpit ad aethera nubem,*
Turbine fumantem baceo et candente favilla."
—Virgil, *Aen.* III. 573—574.

Do you remember, can you still
Recall that day of doubt,
When I was feeling strangely ill,
And you had just gone out?
And when, regretting we had met,
I turned away to fume and fret.

'Tis true we did not quite agree
That day, ah! yes, 'tis true
A mere sham you appeared to me,
For I mistrusted you;
A craven mixture, half of fear,
And half defiance, filled me, dear.

But when that feeling passed away
You taught me how to care,
For you were not of common clay
As other sweethearts were;
Your strength and sweetness in the end
Allured me by their subtle blend.

Dearest, you 're like some garden gem ;
No "rank, luxuriant weed"
Shall win me from your graceful stem,
Or bear from you the meed :
E'en now as I your praises sing,
My love, you 're sweetly colouring.

So when at eve I fill the bowl,
And in my chair recline,
A nightly impulse stirs my soul
To worship at your shrine,
Whence wreaths of blue-grey smoke arise,
And waft me hence to Paradise.

Musings in Mayfair

(*Lady Clare loq.*)

Whenever I have time to feast
My eyes upon our lurid Press,
Wherein each fashionable priest
Takes it in turn to effervesce,
I see the same old question there—
What West-end soul is clean and honest?
And find, to my intense despair,
The echo always answers, "*Non est!*"

Doubtless, it is a certain fact
That sermons (when quite free from fuss),
Like cakes in Pluto's regions, act
As useful sops to sober us!
But I confess I *do* feel vext
To notice that throughout this rude war
They cannot leave the threadbare text—
Magdalen in her Mayfair boudoir!

I like a lecture now and then;
But those are rather apt to pall
That harp upon the "Upper Ten,"
Like some recurring decimal!

So, Preacher, since we've had our fill
Of your deliciously plain dealing,
Why don't you tackle Streatham Hill,
Or scourge "society" in Ealing?

The pride of Peckham might provide
A fit commencement for your toil;
Deceitful Dulwich lies untried,
And Balham still is virgin soil;
Discharge your mission like a bomb,
Set Kew and Bedfork Park disputing;
Lecture on vice in Villadom,
And thrill the spinster hearts of Tooting.

Tear from their eyes the spotted veil;
Denounce the soft, suburban boor;
And point with epigram your tale,
Like the smart setter on the moor!
Come, quit the West-end vices; leave
Belgravian hubbies and their hubbubs;
You've surely something up your sleeve
For those who sojourn in "The Subbubs"!

Cousinly Greetings

Dear Cousins from the country, here you are,
Welcome as roses in the month of March,
I saw you yesterday beside the Mar-
ble Arch.

Thridding the mazes of the dusty Strand,
Again I saw you clustering like bees,
Till round the Monument I watched you stand
At ease.

And there, while I was resting from my sprint
I overheard what sights you meant to "do";
In one short afternoon you'd seen the Mint,
And Zoo,

Tower, St. Paul's, till at the Mansion House
The knee plush (ultra) of the footmen there
Drew from the worthy Squire and eke his spouse
A stare.

The evening saw you mounted on a tram,
Bound for the Tate, (the Turners, I suppose?)
To-day, I gather, you are at Madame
Tussaud's.

Alas! although 'tis sad, I frankly own
I don't possess your tireless energy;
The sights you've seen are nearly all unknown
To me.

And till October comes I greatly fear
My corrugated brow will wear a frown,
Although *you* seem to like this time of year
In town.

For, though e'en restaurants have felt the chill,
And waiters miss the chatter and the hum,
Although the "Troc." is calm, the "Cri." is still
They come!

Rhymes of Reason

"Nous sommes tous d'Athène en ce point, et moi-même
Si Peau d'Ane m'était conté,
J'y prendrais un plaisir extrême."

—La Fontaine.

Some talk of Keats' or Shelley's fame,
While there are others who engrave on
The tablets of their hearts the name
Of Austin, or the Swan (of Avon);
Each to his taste; but each man knows
No lyrics that were ever sung stir
His feeling bosom quite like those
Old rhymes that thrilled him when a youngster.

Ah, then we gathered Nuts and May,
And never thought Miss Muffet childish
Because she left her curds and whey
(Which was most probably a vile dish);
And no one dared to hesitate,
In those dear, distant days, to dub "bard"
The gifted author of that great
Dramatic fragment—Mrs. Hubbard

Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
With cheek so destitute of dimple,
Who has not chuckled as he read
Of Simon who was surnamed "Simple"?
Have *you* e'er gazed with aching eyes
Into a glowing cirque of cinders,
And not expected there would rise
The troubled shade of Polly Flinders?

How often in the midst of strife
Have children suddenly grown quiet,
To hear of Mr. Spratt (and wife),
And their peculiar taste in diet!
And e'en maturer folks may find
(When temper and the gout get chronic)
Tom Tucker soothing to the mind,
Boy Blue an inexpensive tonic!

And so, though things sometimes go wrong,
And all the world seems "quite contrary,"
Solace awaits you in the Song
Of Sixpence or of Mistress Mary:
Then, howsoe'er your poor inside
May threaten, or your pulses throb, you'll
Read of Bo-Peep or Cock-Horse Ride,
And need no more the patent globule!

Cricketers All!

The day was warm, the hour was 3.15;
Some impulse caused my errant steps to stray
Upon a broad and pleasant country green,
Where "fools in flannelette" were hard at play.

A drive that grazed my elbow made me pause.
I saw two yokels piling up the score,
And heard the shout of rapturous applause
That hailed the ball not lost but gone for four.

I gazed upon the game and saw a miss
That must have made the bowler's vitals ache:
(He, though his style defied analysis,
Was far too bent upon his task to break).

And as I watched him, oft and many a time,
He went, like Hamlet's age, nigh out of joint;
And oft a spoon, like this discursive rhyme,
Came very near, but just avoided *point*.

Six times square-leg in raucous tones appealed
For "leg-before"; six times the umpire made
Derisive gestures at the jaded field,
And scorned to lift a finger in their aid.

Once when the batsman was run out (at best
It seemed to me a *most-uncalled* for act),
Relying on the law *j'y suis, j'y reste,*
The lad refused to grasp the obvious fact.

Another, hitting blindly at the pitch,
Soon paid the price of his unguarded zeal,
And earned the sentence of "the caught" from which,
Unfortunately, there is no appeal.

These, though no journalist described each run,
Played for the sheer enjoyment of the sport,
Nor felt the wish to be, *e.g.*, like Gunn,
The subject of the morrow's loud report.

And, though their ways were rough, I did not hear
One single sentence that betrayed the boor,
Nor did I view "with a disdainful sneer"
The short but simple flannels of the poor.

Instead, I watched two youngsters play out time,
Then strolled away to write these lines in praise
Of that great game, the glory of their prime,
And solace of their *early-closing* days!

The Biter Bit

(*The Dogs Bill proposed to wrest from the canine world the privilege of the first bite.*)

Can it be false and am I dreaming,
Or is it only all too true
That callous-hearted men are scheming
To rob our doggies of their due?
Is it not all a dreadful fiction,
Whereat I hold my bated breath,
That on his very first conviction
My honest tyke must die the death?

The Pug and Pom. will stand aghast if
This shameful Bill becomes the law;
Against its tone the stately Mastiff
Uplifts an angry voice and paw;
And not content with mute negation,
The Collie swells the wrathful cry,
Until his howl of indignation
Awakes an echo from the Skye.

And you, who clamber up on my knee,
And wag a tail devoid of care,
Must realise, my faithful Tiny,
That things are not as once they were:
No more must you race up yon high hill,
To worry sheep, your fond delight,
Your motto "*et foxterea nihil*,"
Means there is nothing left to bite.

But stay, I see a silver lining
Illume the blackness of the cloud,
Why waste your time in futile whining
When lawful bites are still allowed?
Ere yet the verdict of the Forum
Shall cheat you of your ancient prey,
Make tears in breeks as once you tore 'em,
Gather the rosebuds while you may.

Thus if, perchance, a cracked tin kettle
The movement of your tail impedes,
While there is time, make haste and settle
The youths who do such horrid deeds.
Let not your canine breast be smitten
With fears of any future woe;
Only make sure those boys are bitten,
Only make sure you don't let go!

"O My Prophetic Soul!"

(*"Old Moore"—not to be confused with Mr. George—has again issued his predictions.*)

The ancients were wont to rely on
The stars for advice and obeyed
The spheres when the Twins and Orion
Flashed forth in a twinkling their aid;
If things were at sixes and sevens,
They weren't in the least put about,
But called (with their trust in the Heavens)
The local astrologer out.

Like Stoics they stifled their heart-ache,
And bowed to the astral command,
Did any irascible star take
Offence at a marriage they planned;
Ah! lover, who longed for her answer,
Oh! maiden, who yearned for his love,
How sorely you suffered from Cancer
Refusing assent from above!

Ah! why is that science forgotten?
In vain do I pucker my brow,
And think why it is we don't cotton
To signs of the Zodiac now;
Though still they have messages for us,
The sceptical think them a sham;
They don't care a toss about Taurus,
They don't care a rap for the Ram!

Why, why did those seers of the past err
In keeping their secrets intact?
For now I am minus a master,
Nor know in the least how to act;
If only the stars in their courses
Could telephone to me, I feel
That I could be "boss" of the Bourses,
And hold ev'ry trump in each "deal."

Then since it is true that the scattered
Star-gazers are under a cloud,
One prophet, at least, should feel flattered
To note his success with the crowd;
For, though his perfervid narration
Is weak and his prophecy poor,
Each year we are told that the nation
(Like 'Oliver') clamours for Moore!

Morals and Maxims

(*In the manner of Mr. Kipling.*)

I

Vendors of Nicotine, Dispensers of Spirits and Beer—
Which of the two will trust you at the end of the second year?

II

If he be wholesome to look on, straight-limbed and clear of eye,
Does not the heart of the Young Girl thrill as he passes by?
If it be wholesome to look on, what does the Young Girl say?
"Sentiment, cloying and sickly! Give me a problem play."

III

The ways that a maid will go are strange, yet simple and tame
To the way that your whisky will go when your cook has a key to the same.

IV

Lo! when you spy 'neath a hedge the loafer in blue
at his trade,
Signalling lies to his mate—be thou in no wise
afraid.
In vain in the sight of the Car is the trap of the
Copper displayed.

V

In private The Horse is reported a Sceptre to
gallop and stay.
It is ill. Does a man find a treasure and give it
away?
In private The Horse is a roarer, uncertain and
tricky as Eve.
It is well. Was there ever a trainer who hadn't a
bit up his sleeve?

VI

Does the waiter deny what thou cravest, refusing to
serve thee with more,
When the lights of the restaurant flicker? Get out!
It is rather a bore.
But the wise do not argue the point in a matter
of Licensing lore.

VII

Does she smile at her cards, and yet *think* she will
"leave it to you"?
'Tis plain as her Ladyship's face what she wants
you to do.

VIII

Wait not outside Stage-doors. Yet shall she find
you, indeed.
Even your spaniel knows the hour and the place
where you feed.

IX

My son, when thou playest off-side, take heed lest
thy guerdon may be
The Boot of a scrummaging foe, or the Whistle that
orders a "free."
In vain are the tricks that are done when the game
has a 'cute referee.

The Motor-Buster

"It was a phantom of delight,
When first it gleamed upon my sight."
And seemed to hint a time of bliss
In store for the metropolis;
When we should travel safe and sound,
Nor use the District Underground;
And City men would cease to fuss
Upon an ancient omnibus—
A perfect motor, nobly planned,
To traverse Holborn and the Strand.

But when, upon a closer view,
I saw, and heard, and smelt it too;
And fought the clouds of dust that beat
Straight in my face up Regent Street,
I owned my first impression wrong,
And muttered something hot and strong;
Then turned aside to cross the road
In time to hear the thing explode;
Whereat I left it in disgust,
And read next morning it had bust.

And now from early morn till e'en
I hear the pulse of the machine
That clatters past my humble door
In one unending shriek and roar;
With aching head and deafened ear
I note with apprehensive fear
"The traveller 'twixt life and death"
Endeavour to regain his breath,
As once again it skids away,
"To haunt, to startle, and waylay."

THE POET'S INFLUENZA

"Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead."—POPE.

TO-DAY, alas! no witty *mots*
Shoot through my keenly quick (ahem!) brain;
I feel a fulness in the nose,
A soreness of the mucous membrane;
My headache, too, is most severe;
The pains within my limbs are stinging;
And, though I've noises in each ear,
'Tis not the Muse that does the singing.

My Pipe is out of tune; I find
That when I breathe thereon it splutters;
Its notes are of the throaty kind,
Or "flash" as those the forger "utters";
I struggle bravely but, although
My motto says *Nil Desperandum*,
That other thing I have to blow
Would make the very pipes of Pan dumb.

To ask me now for jests and quips
Would be abominably cruel;
Sealed is this pair of lyric lips
To open only for their gruel;

So, reader, don't expect from me
A poem wrought with artful cunning;
You would not ask it could you see
These eyes, like *Charley's Aunt*, "still running"!

A Fashion Forecast

(" *Mark my words, crinolines will come in again.*"—
Mr. Andrew Lang *in* " *The Illustrated London News.*")

Observe, no note of indecision
Weakens the force of what he states;
Endowed with more than normal vision
He sees the future's fashion-plates:
The time is near (he thinks), to-morrow
May usher in the fateful morn
When ladies will awake to sorrow,
For crinolines will then be worn!

Ah! what a time of tribulation
Will then come in to disconcert
That large proportion of the nation
Whose habit is to wear a skirt;
For, Beth, though in your Gibson rig you're
Turning all hearts and heads to-day,
Soon you will find your splendid figure
Is, broadly speaking, thrown away.

Also, I think some small compassion
Should certainly be felt for us;
Think what the advent of this fashion
Will mean to all who use a 'bus!
What art will soothe the melancholy
Of men upon their homeward ride,
When lovely woman, "hoop'd in folly,"
Insists on squatting eight a side?

The lovelorn swain upon the Tube route
Will soon perceive the "little rift,"
When she he worships murmurs "You brute!"
(Colliding with him in the lift.)
And then his proffered arm refusing,
Because "she hates a clumsy man,"
She'll leave him (like stout Cortez) musing
Upon the pique of Marian!

True, Mr. Lang, your words *sound* solemn,
And yet I wish you would explain
Whether you penned that chatty column
In graver or in lighter vein;
For, though you always write sincerely,
This little doubt my mind assails,
Whether 'tis sober truth, or merely
One of your charming fairy tales!

Lines to a Looking-Glass

The very mention of your name
  Inspires my lyric lips like wine,
Constraining me to hymn the fame
  Of yonder black and silver shrine,
Where every matron and her maid
Diurnally invoke your aid.

Here, where no prying gaze of man
  Disturbs your faithful devotees,
Both Lady Clare and Mary Anne
  Perform those toilet mysteries
That serve as artful bait for scores
Of eligible bachelors.

Naught can escape your watchful eyes.
  You know the sorrows that annoy
The heart of Phyllis when she spies
  Among the gold the gray alloy,
And note the 'frame' that strives to screen
The cunning 'transformation' scene!

You know precisely what the 'pearls'
That flash the smiles of Lucy cost;
What sort of gum sticks on the curls
That Margaret once loved and lost;
And what peculiar tricks are done
To gear Dot's waist to 21.

From you proceed the useful hints
That aid the chemical brunette
When she applies those carmine tints
(For which she's probably in debt).
But stay, I must not cast (like you)
Reflections upon what they do.

But when with aching heart I read
How Suffragettists effervesce,
I think of you, and say, "Indeed
Here lies their sphere of usefulness:
When will your erring satellites
Content themselves with Women's Rites?"

On Mutability

Ah, Poet, when you wrote your mournful lay,
And sang that in each unsuspecting breast
There lurks the gnawing microbe of unrest,
That Constancy is but a name to-day,
And naught there is that will not pass away;
Then, though great spasms shook my ample chest,
I cried, "A poet must, of course, know best;
All things indeed are destined to decay."
But now Hope lifts again her 'minished head;
For lo, at breakfast, when my sad eyes ranged
Over the morning news, a dazzling line
Burst on my sight and warmed my blood like wine;
Whereat in joyous tones I loudly said,
"Thank Heav'n the Bank Rate still remains unchanged!"

To Phyllis

(*Who would tax all bachelors.*)

Dear Phyllis, once my only joy,
And now my confidante instead,
I fear your scheme will much annoy
The men who aren't about to wed,—
Who take, according to their wont,
Old *Punch's* sage advice, and "Don't."

Unlike those pests whom Gilbert blames,
I understand your "little list"
Comprises several thousand names
Of girls who will be always "Miss'd";
Whence you deduce a horrid dearth
Of wedded couples on the earth.

And so to remedy this ill
You formulate the subtle plan
Of drawing up a little Bill
To mulct the marriageable man:
But ere you mend the marriage-laws,
Fair Phyllis of Philistia, pause.

Believe me, dear, 'twill never do
To place this burden on our backs;
We cannot stand, not e'en from you,
Another would-be link 'em tax;
But if you must tax someone, I
Have got a plan that you might try.

Be patriotic and "protect"
Your home-grown brand of bachelors,
But tax those Britons who elect
To wed outside their native shores:
Do not admit one, duty free,
Who flaunts his "maid in Germany."

So, Phyllis, turn your thoughts to those
Who roam abroad to seek their mates,
And cease to ruffle the repose
Of single-minded celibates:
Sweet mistress of so many arts,
Spare this poor bachelor of Herts.

"PROCUL ESTE PROFANI"

I LOVE our rural sounds and scents,
Each patch of green, each glimpse of blue,
And yet one haunting grief prevents
My full enjoyment in the view:
For when I take the final spring,
And gain the summit of the slope,
I know some lurid poster thing
Will ask me if I've used its soap!

Sweet, to the man of cheese and lard,
The uses of advertisement,
Such persons miserly regard
Their hoardings with supreme content;
But those who love the fen and field,
The mountain-pass and sylvan scene,
Feel it is somewhat hard to yield
To bloated kings of margarine.

For Sutton's seed, (like Abraham's),
Is thick as sand upon the shore;
And every sight of woolly lambs
Brings Eastman to my mind once more;

Yet, though I'm but a simple youth,
It seems a trifle indiscreet
To advertise the obvious truth,
That Jobson's sugar "can't be *beet!*"

Rejected Addresses

You, Charlotte Anne, in days of yore
Declared you loved me, fondly swore
That you would evermore be true,
The while with eyes of tender blue
You smiled upon me by the shore.

And now you tell me I 'm a bore,
And fair, and fat, and forty-four—
Just Heav'n ! to hear such words from you—
You, Charlotte Anne !

Then since you cannot love me more,
Give back my gage of love ; restore
That ring of dainty turquoise hue—
What's that ? You're bothered if you do ?
And think that this is where you score—
You Charlatan !

THE TRAIL OF THE SERPENT

(*The year* 1907 *will always be memorable; for not until late in the autumn was the Great Sea-Serpent sighted.*)

I FELT my courage steadily abating;
Alternately I seemed to freeze and burn;
For oh, my heart was weary of awaiting
The prodigal's return.

Daily I scanned my *Mail*, to learn with sorrow
That even IT knew not where he lay hid;
Then whispered bravely, "He will come to-morrow"—
Only he never did.

And yet in other years I can remember,
Rising like Venus from the crested foam,
The Great Sea-Serpent early in September
Trekked to his English home.

And round what someone calls our "billow-swept isle,"
With manners that endeared him everywhere,
He cruised, the model of a genial reptile,
Sampling our Northern air.

Lone mariners recalled that *dies iræ*,
When in their lonely watches at the wheel
They saw him rising, sinuous and wiry,
And felt their blood congeal.

Sea-captains (men by nature strangely truthful)
Described in detail how they 'd seen him prance
A hundred feet aloft, and filled each youth full
With love of high romance.

About his stature, *à la* Miss Corelli,
Daily Express-ed the free opinions came,
Pounding each rival theory to jelly,
Bruiting abroad his fame.

Romance indeed clung round him like a halo;
Even the Gooseberry's giant girth was less;
Yet all this year, like *Brer Fox*, did he lay low,
Cheating the ha 'penny Press.

But now we celebrate his resurrection—
Two brave Tintagel tourists wire with glee
They watched him gambol while his scaly neck shone
High o'er the sunlit sea.

Salve! Sir Serpent; let me say that we could
Have better spared a Bannerman than lose
These tales about your flowing mane and sleek hood
That stir my lyric Muse.

A Ballade of the Backs

"*Is it true, think you?*"—Shakspere, *Winter's Tale.*

I like my cousin, only she's
A Cambridge girl, and when I tried
To shew her what I thought would please,
And play the Ciceronian guide,
She metaphorically "shied"
At all my darkly blue attacks,
And to each point I made, replied,
"You've *nothing* like the Cambridge Backs."

I thought those stately lines of trees
Through which the Cher and Isis glide
Would win her heart, but even these
It was her humour to deride;
E'en the Ashmolean she defied,
And still, (the thought my bosom racks)
In smooth "Fitzbilliambics" cried,
"You've nothing *like* the Cambridge Backs."

We reached "The High": "Now then, Louise,"
Said I, (as Univ. we espied),
"Don't tell me Peterhouse or Caius
Can match this pile"; but, cut and dried,
Her swift retort my hopes belied;
"One thing," she cooed, "your City lacks,
Though you have prospects fair and wide,
You 've nothing like the *Cambridge* Backs."

L'Envoi.

Oxonians, doff your naughty pride,
And go and put your heads in sacks;
Though you may boast the Oxford *Side*,
You 've nothing like the Cambridge *Backs!*

EXPLICIT

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